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Peabody Museum  
Cambridge 38, Mass.  
28 May 1947

Dear Sir: (Addressed to Captain Frankel)

I am writing you on the suggestion of Dr. Strakhovsky, here at Harvard, in the hope that you may be able to help me.

First background: I am an orientalist by profession, worked in the Middle East with the OSS during the war, and am now at Harvard. I have contacted my people (Steve Penrose) in Washington, after my return from Germany last month, and they seem unable to offer any solution to the problem.

The problem is Nikolai Nikolaevitch Poppe, a friend, and the greatest living authority on Soviet Siberia and Outer Mongolia. Born in Shanghai in 1897, speaks twelve languages, prof. in the University of Leningrad 1923-8, and Moscow 1930-41. The two years in between mark the time when he was in Outer Mongolia organizing proper USSR-Mongol relations. He has done the same for Chinese Turkestan, and has lived in various cities of Asiatic Russia. Member of the Academy of Sciences, special consultant for USSR-Manchurian and Mongol affairs for the Foreign Ministry, he helped draw up the Soviet-Japanese treaty during (or just before) the war. He has also helped in the training of Soviet agents in China and her provinces, and Japan. He made one error. He spoke good German and had German friends. In 1939 his chief Samoilovich was liquidated and NN was given the third degree, but finally acquitted. He said he was afraid that the second time would be the last, so in 1942 he was in the Kuban area and joined the Germans, returned to Germany and his friends. After the collapse he, with wife and two sons, fled to the British Zone where they are living as British DP's. I saw him in October 1946. The OSS people in Germany were convinced of the man's value, as his history should indicate, but they lacked authority to do anything. They all seemed afraid of doing anything the easterners would dislike. In January I learned that the British and American CICs had received a memo from the easterners asking for the return of one NN, who was believed to be alive in the western zones.

Solution of the problem: As you can surmise NN's life is a bit in danger; he is not just any run-away Russian, but a valuable source of information, besides being a great scholar. (He has written 26 volumes in Russian, German, Mongol and Kazakh Turkish). He has worked with

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Soviet because he did the Partisan complaint, and knows much. Could he not be brought to this country and used? He is quite willing to cooperate, and if this man were here, I think he could secure a position in a learned institution if the authorities in Washington decided they couldn't use him. (Of course after debriefing him, because he certainly is of value to any group in Washington interested in the USSR.) Could he come here under the Nationalist quota?

Please excuse the involved narrative, but I have been trying long to save the man, and I have come to the end of my resources. The OSS people in Heidelberg said that the British are probably interested in him. Well I have just returned from London, and seen some interested people, they expect the FBI to take an interest, because he is more concerned with the Middle and Far East. Can't something be done SOON to save him, because if the Soviets find him he is lost. I can give you more information, or come to Washington, but I feel it is of importance to our gov't, and also to the subversive world, that such a person not be allowed to perish, but to serve a function.

Most Sincerely,

Richard N. Fife